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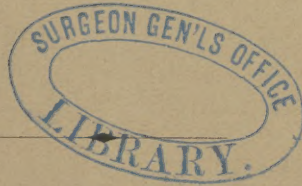
REPORT

— OF —

Senate and House Committee,

ON THE

INSANE ASYLUM.



TUTTLE & CO., RUTLAND,
STATIONERS AND OFFICIAL PRINTERS TO THE STATE OF VT.
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REPORT
IN SENATE CHAMBER, }
November 20, 1878. }

Read, and on motion of Mr. Ormsbee ordered to lie and the usual number of copies of the same printed for the use of the Legislature.

F. W. BALDWIN,

Secretary..

REPORT.

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NOW IN SESSION :

The Standing Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives on the Insane Asylum respectfully state : That in compliance with a joint resolution in that behalf they have performed their duties, and now present this their report :

That on the eleventh day of November, A. D. 1878, they visited the Insane Asylum at Brattleboro, and made as full examination of the same as time would permit ; and also examined the Trustees and officers of the Asylum as to matters pertaining to the administration of the institution, as well as the relation of the same to the State.

In view of the late report made by the Commission created under joint resolution No. 137, of the session of 1876, we did not deem it necessary to carry our examination and investigation as far as we otherwise might. As we understand the matter, the report of said former Commission states correctly the relation of the State to the Asylum, and we need hardly to say that the relation is not only peculiar, but is of itself an anomaly.

The State has been for years and now is sending its insane paupers to the care of an institution over which it has no control—except to regulate abuses, if any there are—and in which it has no recognized interest ; upon terms as to compensation of its own making from time to time, and so far as it appears without even the implied assent of the officers of the Asylum ; it is only necessary to state this fact to make apparent the unusual and, to say the least, not creditable position of the State in the premises. Your committee are of the opinion that the price paid to the Asylum by the State for

the support of its insane is quite sufficient in view of the somewhat limited, if not inadequate, accommodations furnished a portion of the patients; at the same time it is but just to say that the past and present expense to the State for the support of its insane poor, is undoubtedly much less than it would or could be in a State Asylum, especially if regard was had to expense of building and furnishing an asylum; at the same time your committee cannot avoid the conclusion that while the Asylum at Brattleboro gives to the State a fair return in a pecuniary point of view for what the State pays, the care and accommodations furnished to our insane unfortunates, are not such as to meet the approval of the good sense and humanity that pervades a large majority of the people of the State. And in this connection we do not intend or desire to reflect upon the managers or management of the Asylum at Brattleboro, but on the contrary we desire to put upon record our approval of both managers and management. The trouble lies in the fact that the asylum has not sufficient capacity to meet the wants of the State, and at the same time to receive such other patients as the managers naturally prefer; so that the institution is crowded to such an extent that as to some of the "wards" or "halls" there is a very apparent want of ventilation and of attendants. To cure these real or supposed ends would require quite a large outlay of money in the erection of new buildings, and in having a larger corps of attendants, an expense which, in the judgment of your committee, we cannot reasonably expect the managers of the institution to undertake for the benefit of the State. Your committee have carefully considered the report of Dr. Goldsmith and his associates hereinafter referred to, and desire to say that the result of our examination and investigation is such that without scarcely an exception we can and do approve of their comments, strictures and conclusions, and especially do we believe *that it is the first duty of the State to take and carry out the necessary measures to erect, furnish and complete a State Asylum for the Insane*, the same to be plain but substantial, and built with reference to the comfort and health of

patients, aided by the many modern appliances now in use in similar institutions in our sister States ; and in the opinion of your committee there is no subject with which the State has at present to do, that so earnestly calls and demands the action and persistent efforts of our present Legislature as the one in question. We apprehend that there are many persons in the asylum at this time who are not State beneficiaries, in fact, but "*town paupers*" who have been improperly saddled on to the State under the selfish and loose (if not reprehensible) practice of town authorities in that behalf. Legislation is needed to cure this abuse.

Your Committee have given attention to the report of William H. Walker, Esq., hereinbefore referred to, so far as the same suggests legislative aid on enactments in reference to the subject under consideration, and we recommend that his suggestions be followed in the main, and to that end we herewith report certain bills for your consideration and action.

Your Committee further recommend, that it is the duty of the State to provide for the safe and comfortable care of the insane convicts and criminals of the State, at or in connection with the State prison, rather than by sending them to the Asylum, to be kept with the insane unfortunates not convicts or criminals ; and we respectfully suggest that this matter may be very properly considered in connection with the proposed additions to the State prison.

Your committee have received the "comments of the officers of the Vermont Asylum for the Insane, on the report of the Special Commissioners," but have received the same too late for perusal, and we call your attention to it, believing that it merits your candid consideration.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

E. J. ORMSBEE, Senate Committee.

W. F. TEMPLETON,	} House Committee.
J. L. HARRINGTON,	
A. F. HUBBARD,	
F. A. DWINELL,	

While I concur with the majority of the committee in the greater part of their report and recommendations, I must say that I could not discover a "want of proper ventilation" in any part of the Asylum, with the exception of the Marsh building (so called), and the managers of the Asylum informed us that they were preparing to remedy the same, and shall remove all cause of complaint.

In my judgment if the State will take measures to remove from the Asylum the insane criminals there confined, and the demented paupers, that the accommodations of the institution will then be ample to properly supply all the wants of the State.

I do not approve of all the "*comments, strictures, and conclusions*" of the commissioners referred to in said report, nor do I believe that the State at the present time should erect a State Asylum for the Insane.

C. W. WITTERS,

Of Senate Committee.

